

the
GREENWICH VILLAGE ORCHESTRA
BARBARA YAHR, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2018 | 3:00 PM | ALL SAINTS CHURCH



2018-2019 SEASON
CONCERTI PER TUTTI

A NOTE FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Greetings!

The GVO is proud to present our 2018-2019 Season at beautiful and historic All Saints Church. We are excited to share the stage with stellar soloists from around the country and talent from within the GVO itself. With works by composers from Chris Brubeck, Franz Schubert, Samuel Barber, Gustav Holst, and more, we are thrilled to present a season that explores the many facets of what an orchestra can be. This orchestra is a labor of love for all of us, and we enjoy nothing more than sharing the fruits of our labors with you, our audience.



Barbara Yahr
Music Director and Conductor

Established in 1986, the GVO is a symphony orchestra composed entirely of volunteers. By day, we are accountants, artists, attorneys, carpenters, editors, physicians, professors, programmers, psychologists, retirees, scientists, secretaries, teachers, and writers. As musicians, we are dedicated to bringing the best possible performances of great music to our audiences and are committed to serving the community while keeping our ticket prices affordable.

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- Hire our exquisite Music Director, Barbara Yahr;
- Attract the most talented soloists performing in NYC today;
- Perform outreach concerts in hospitals and community centers;
- Enhance our *Together in Music* initiative, making music accessible to children with special needs.

Become an integral part of GVO's music making today by making a contribution to the continued success of the GVO. Online: <http://www.gvo.org/support>

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PROGRAM

Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Barbara Yahr, Music Director and Conductor

Music Director Chair sponsored by Janice Handler and Norman Ilowite and in memory of Leonard S. Lerman

Lysander Piano Trio

Itamar Zorman, violin

Michael Katz, cello

Liza Stepanova, piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C major, Op. 56

Allegro

Largo

Rondo alla polacca

Lysander Piano Trio

— Intermission —

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Concerto for Orchestra

Introduzione. Andante non troppo — Allegro vivace

Presentando le coppie. Allegro scherzando

Elegia. Andante non troppo

Intermezzo interrotto. Allegretto

Finale. Presto

Next up for the GVO

All In the Family - December 16 - 3 PM

Carnival of the Animals featuring Helen-Jean Arthur, narrator

Side-by-Side with Students from Third Street Music School, Eric Mahl, conductor

Grofé *On the Trail* - Dvorak *Furiant* - Stravinsky Excerpts from *Firebird*

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Flash photography is not permitted during the performance.

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN - TRIPLE CONCERTO

Beethoven wrote this unusual concerto during the spring and summer of 1804, a time of unbelievable creativity for him. In those months he revised his recently-completed *Eroica* Symphony, began the *Waldstein* Sonata, and made sketches for the *Appassionata* Sonata and for his opera *Leonore* (later re-named *Fidelio*). Beethoven himself was apparently unsure how to classify his new orchestral work with three soloists. After the work was completed he referred to it as a “concertante for violin, violoncello and pianoforte with full orchestra.” Today it is most often called the Triple Concerto.

Concertos for multiple instruments of course call to mind the baroque concerto grosso, in which a small group of soloists plays in contrast to the main body of the orchestra, but the Triple Concerto is no concerto grosso. Rather, it is a concerto for piano trio and orchestra. Such a concerto posed two particular problems for Beethoven: how to give each soloist enough individual attention, and how to keep the cello from becoming buried within this complex texture. He solved these problems ingeniously: the first by having his three soloists play often just as a trio, the second by allowing the cellist the first statement of many of the themes.

The Triple Concerto contrasts sharply with the other music Beethoven was composing in these years. Whereas the *Eroica*, the opera and the two piano sonatas burn with a sense of urgency and dramatic fury, the Triple Concerto lacks their tension: this is expansive music, relaxed and agreeable rather than striving.

Allegro. The opening movement gets off to a grand start with a full-orchestra exposition of its themes, but textures thin out considerably when the soloists enter. Beethoven often has the soloists play by themselves with only unobtrusive orchestral accompaniment, punctuated by tutti outbursts. The thematic material in this movement is genial rather than distinctive, the rhythms slightly swung rather than sharp-edged. The most impressive feature of this movement may be its span: at 17 minutes, it is one of Beethoven’s longest.

Largo. By contrast, the second is very brief, almost an interlude between the dynamic outer movements. Beethoven rarely used the tempo indication Largo, a marking that suggests very slow and dignified music. An orchestra of muted strings introduces the Largo, but this lyric movement belongs almost entirely to the three soloists—it is

essentially chamber music. Once again, the cello leads the way, this time with a theme marked *molto cantabile*.

Rondo alla polacca. Beethoven marks the finale Rondo alla polacca, or a rondo in the style of a polonaise. The cello introduces the main theme and launches this jovial movement on its way. Near the end comes a surprising passage: a polonaise is in 3/4, but now Beethoven resets his principal theme in 2/4, shortening it and making it dance in new ways before going back to 3/4 for the coda and cadence.

Though completed in 1804, the Triple Concerto did not make its way decisively into the musical world, and it has remained one of Beethoven's less familiar works. Despite several private performances, this music did not receive its public premiere in Vienna until May 1808, nearly a year after it had been published. © Eric Bromberger

BARTÓK - CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA

"In my youth," Béla Bartók once remarked, "Bach and Mozart were not my ideals of the beautiful, but rather Beethoven." And Beethoven remained his touchstone for the string quartet in his own cycle of six quartets that spanned over three decades of the Hungarian composer's career. Beethoven was likewise a key model for the remarkable balance of discipline, formal innovation, and exciting fantasy that keeps Bartók's mature music so perennially appealing. Indeed, the influence of the late Beethoven quartets informs extends beyond Bartók's chamber music to such concert hall scores as *Music for Strings*, *Percussion*, and *Celesta* (premiered in 1937), which opens with a fugal movement.

When he wrote that seminal score, Bartók had not yet been compelled to abandon his beloved Hungary for the reluctant exile of his final years. There were, however, clear signs of his unease as fascism spread during what the poet W.H. Auden was so famously to denounce as "a low dishonest decade." (In 1935 the composer refused an award for one of his early pieces, declaring "I do not wish to accept the Greguss Medal in the present or in the future, neither alive nor dead.") Once the Second World War was under way - the Hungarian government had allied with the Nazis - Bartók set sail with his second wife for the United States. A downward

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

spiral had begun, and Bartók found himself alienated in this new land. He faced an indifferent public, and the leukemia that would kill him soon after the war ended began to affect his health.

It was in the midst of this very dark period for the composer - when it seemed his creativity had reached its terminus - that a new commission arrived, in the summer of 1943, for an orchestral work. Serge Koussevitzky, the famous director of the Boston Symphony, asked Bartók for a new piece for that ensemble. He had been prompted by the intervention of the composer's allies and fellow Hungarians, the conductor (and former Bartók student) Fritz Reiner and the violinist Joseph Szigeti. Though he reportedly weighed less than 100 pounds when he undertook the commission, Bartók rallied and produced one of the great success stories of modern music. The *Concerto for Orchestra*, which he composed in the summer and early fall of 1943, premiered in December of the following year. It was soon embraced by both critics and the public and has become an orchestral staple.

Its musical poetry remains bracing almost 70 years later. The idea of a concerto featuring not just a soloist, as in Mozart's classical example of the genre, but for the whole ensemble as a collective of virtuosos did not begin with Bartók, and it would be taken up by numerous other composers in his wake. At the same time, Bartók revives something of the Baroque concept of the concerto-the so-called "concerto grosso," which juxtaposes various smaller groupings of instruments against the texture of the larger ensemble. And of course the *Concerto for Orchestra* also serves to showcase the expressive power and versatility of a modern orchestra. Indeed, instrumental timbre turns out to be a significant dimension of this music, along with its innovative formal design and the manner in which Bartók develops his thematic material.

In formal terms, the *Concerto* can also be regarded as a symphony in five movements, beginning in a dark, brooding mood but finding its way to triumphant affirmation. (For a number of reasons, he regarded the symphony per se at this moment in history as passé.) Bartók lays out this five-movement design according to one of his favorite patterns: the palindromic or arch-like structure ABCBA. Thus the slow third movement is the tragic center and is surrounded by two lighter interludes, which in turn are framed by the two longest (and fastest) movements.

Contrast fuels the opening movement, in which a slow introduction is followed by an allegro crowded with furious counterpoint. Each of the three inner movements has a distinctive feature. The scherzo-like second (titled “The Game of Pairs”) presents pairs of instruments in sequence, with a brass chorale as the trio. The haunting “Elegy” at the heart of the Concerto recalls material from the slow introduction and contains traits of Bartók’s signature “night music.”

The fourth movement (“Interrupted Intermezzo”) plays with clichés of “innocent” folk music, while the rude “interruption” is often claimed to represent Shostakovich, whose Seventh Symphony (the “Leningrad”) had recently become a popular rallying cry of resistance to the invading Germans. (The music that is allegedly being parodied was itself intended by Shostakovich as a savage parody of the forces of totalitarianism). Other interpretations, however, have challenged that longstanding view of Bartók’s intent. In any case, the presto finale, with its madly whirring strings and brass fanfares, urges the *Concerto* on to a thrilling conclusion in Bartók’s inimitable style. © Thomas May

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

BARBARA YAHR

Now in her seventeenth season with the GVO, Music Director Barbara Yahr continues to lead the orchestra to new levels of distinction. With blockbuster programming and internationally renowned guest artists, the GVO under Barbara's baton, has grown into an innovative, collaborative institution offering a rich and varied season of classical music to our local community.

A native of New York, Ms. Yahr's career has spanned from the United States to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Her previous posts include Principal Guest Conductor of the Munich Radio Orchestra, Resident Staff Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Maestro Lorin Maazel and Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared as a guest conductor with such orchestras as the Bayerische Rundfunk, Dusseldorf Symphoniker, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Frankfurt Radio, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Janacek Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington D.C. She has also conducted the orchestras in Columbus, Detroit, Calgary, Chattanooga, Louisiana, Richmond, New Mexico, Lubbock, and Anchorage, as well as the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, New World Symphony, and the Chautauqua Festival Symphony Orchestra. She has also appeared in Israel conducting in both Jerusalem and Eilat. As an opera conductor, she has led new productions in Frankfurt, Giessen, Tulsa, Cincinnati, Minnesota and at The Mannes School of Music in NYC. Most recently, she has coached the actors on the set of the Amazon Series, *Mozart in the Jungle*, and in October 2016, she conducted the season opener of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra and led the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra musicians in a free concert of Dvorak and Mozart.

Ms. Yahr is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Middlebury College where she studied piano and philosophy. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with Max Rudolf and an MM in Music Theory from the Manhattan School of Music. She was a student of Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine.

A central focus of Ms. Yahr's career has been her commitment to finding new ways to reach a broader population with music. This path ultimately led her to pursuing an MA in Music Therapy at NYU and training at the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy in NYC. Her pioneering, community music therapy project, Together in Music, brings orchestral music to the special needs community with uniquely interactive programs presented annually by the GVO.

Barbara is married to Dr. Alexander Lerman and has two adult step children, Abe and Dania, and a 16 year old son, Ben.



LYSANDER PIANO TRIO

The Lysander Piano Trio, a winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition, has been praised by the *Strad* for its “incredible ensemble, passionate playing, articulate and imaginative ideas and wide palette of colours.” The Trio has developed a reputation for innovative programming of master works from the canon alongside newer works and hidden gems of the repertoire. An ideal example of this is the Trio’s 2014 debut recording, *After a Dream* (CAG Records), featuring music by Ravel, Haydn, Schubert, Joaquín Turina, and Moshe Zorman, which was acclaimed for its “polished and spirited interpretations” (NY Times).



The Trio’s 2018-2019 appearances include the Bard Festival, Mobile Chamber Music, National Sawdust, Chamber Music Kelowna, Calgary Pro Musica, Clemson University and Pro Musica of San Miguel in Mexico. In addition, the group will perform in concerts and residencies across the US as a featured group of Allied Concert Services. Previous seasons’ engagements include appearances at Mostly Mozart’s 50th Anniversary season, as well as concerts at the Copenhagen Summer Festival and Chautauqua Institution, and a critically acclaimed recital at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Other highlights included engagements at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, UCLA’s Clark Memorial Library, and Chamber Music Tulsa, along with debut performances at The Kravis Center (West Palm Beach), and in Little Rock, AR and Melbourne, FL. The Trio was also featured in a special program with clarinetist Charles Neidich, presented by the Chamber Music Society of Philadelphia in January 2017.

The Trio is proactive in commissioning new works and creating programs that mix the music of today with well-loved masterworks. Their latest commission is Gilad Cohen’s *Around the Cauldron*, co-commissioned by CAG and premiered at Weill Recital Hall in March 2017 on the CAG Encores series. Other recent Trio commissions include: *Ghostwritten Variations* by Venezuelan-American composer Reinaldo Moya, who received a 2015 McKnight Fellowship; Jakub Ciupinski’s *The Black Mirror* (premiered at Weill Recital Hall); and *Four Movements Inspired by “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,”* penned by four pre-teen composers of ComposerCraft from NYC’s Kaufman Music Center and premiered at Merkin Concert Hall in January 2014.

The Lysander Piano Trio was formed at The Juilliard School in 2009 and takes its name from the character in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

THIS SEASON

Sunday, December 16, 2018, at 3:00 PM

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Saint-Saëns *Carnival of the Animals*
featuring narrator **Helen-Jean Arthur**



Sunday, February 24, 2019, at 3:00 PM
EASTERN ROMANCE

Dvorák *Romance*
Glazunov *Concerto for Violin*
Ming-Feng Hsin, violin
Rachmaninoff *Symphony No. 3*

Sunday, April 7, 2019, at 3:00 PM

ORCHESTRAL BRILLIANCE

Debussy *Nocturnes*
Eric Mahl, Assistant Conductor

Brubeck *Prague Concerto*
George Curran, bass trombone

Strauss Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*



Sunday, May 19, 2019, at 3:00 PM
THE EARTH IN CONTEXT

Copland *Quiet City*
Phil Parsons, trumpet; Jason Smoller, English horn
Holst *The Planets*

